



PROSECUTION RESTS — Pictured outside the courtroom while awaiting the jury's verdict, First Circuit Court Solicitor Julian S. Wolfe (left) and Fourth Circuit Court Solicitor Robert L. Kilgo discuss the merits of the State's case against Samuel Wright Jr.



DEFENSE ATTORNEYS—Shedrick Morgan (left) and Newton Pough, court-appointed attorneys for Samuel Wright Jr., yesterday drew words of praise from Judge J. M. Brailsford Jr. for the "brilliant way" they conducted the defense. The judge addressed his remarks in open court.



CHIEFS DISCUSS TRIAL — Police Chief T. E. Salley (left) and Lt. J. P. Strom, assistant chief of the State Law Enforcement Division, are pictured at the second floor staircase while the jury reaches a verdict during yesterday's day-long murder trial.



DURING RECESS FOR LUNCH—Samuel Wright Jr., who yesterday was found guilty on a murder charge in General Sessions Court, is shown in front of the courtroom during a recess for lunch. Guarding the prisoner is Deputy Sheriff P. T. Lancaster. Wright received a death sentence.

Wright Found Guilty Of Murder By Jury

(Continued From Page 1)

ated to the court that the key was used to enter the Stroman home on the night of the murder. The maid then described the entrance into the Stroman home and stated that she found the back door open when she reported for work Sunday morning, February 27, at about 7:30 a. m. "I started breakfast, preparing lunch, and a few minutes later heard Mr. Stroman call," the maid said. "I then went to the door and I found it was broken into and I saw blood on the floor. At this point the Stroman maid broke into tears and was unable to continue her testimony for a few minutes. After regaining her composure she described where she found Mrs. Stroman's body, reporting that it was "lying back over a rocking chair."

During cross examination of the maid, handled by Morgan, she said she entered the room after hearing Mr. Stroman call her name. "I asked him who done it and he said 'a nigger done it' but couldn't say who it was," the maid testified. She also testified that Mr. Stroman

man knew Wright—that he worked for him as a yard boy. At the close of her testimony she said Wright left her house on the night of the murder at about 7:15 and that she went to bed at about 10:30. She reported that she heard no noises during the night.

Deputy P. T. Lancaster testified that he picked Wright up in Eutawville after the Negro surrendered Monday, February 28, to Magistrate U. Watts. Lancaster said he brought the Negro to Orangeburg for questioning at police headquarters.

The testimony of the next two witnesses, John Paisley and David Bradley, both colored, was not allowed by Judge Brailsford, who instructed the jury to disregard anything they had said on the stand.

STROM TAKES STAND

L. J. P. Strom, assistant chief of the State Law Enforcement Division in Columbia, was next on the stand and stated that he talked to Wright on Monday, February 28, at police headquarters in Orangeburg. He said that Wright gave officers an oral statement in

Orangeburg that night and signed a statement at SLED headquarters the following morning. After Strom testified that the statement was made freely and that no inducement was used to get Wright's signature, the statement was offered into evidence and read to the jury by Kilgo.

In the signed statement Wright admitted entering the Stroman home, hitting Mr. Stroman with an axe, turning to strike Mrs. Stroman with the same instrument and then removing a wallet from Mr. Stroman's pocket. The statement then reveals the movements Wright made after the murder.

During cross examination Morgan questioned Strom as to whether Wright was informed of his right to counsel and received the reply that he was.

City Detective Harold Hall, the next State witness, testified as to the location of Mrs. Stroman's body when he arrived on the scene and gave a description of the general layout of the home. He also said Wright admitted the slaying during questioning in Orangeburg and in Columbia.

"On the night of February 28, Wright was carried to Highway 601 by-pass where he showed us the vacant lot in which he disposed of Mr. Stroman's pocketbook," Hall said. "Photos of the finding were made that night by John Whalen (T and D Staff Writer) and photos of the spot were made later by Sgt. Leroy Kemmerlin of the city police department. Wright was present when we found the wallet."

Detective Hall also identified two papers, one a bank deposit slip, and the other a bill of sale and said that Wright also told officers where they could be found. They were found about 10 feet from the wallet, Hall testified.

At this point the murder weapon was introduced into evidence and identified by Hall as the axe he found next to a safe located in a hall closet in the Stroman home. He said the axe was bloody when he saw it on the morning after Mrs. Stroman was killed and her husband beamed.

Pough, in cross examination, got from Hall a statement that no fingerprints were found on the wallet. Court recessed at 12:37 p. m. for lunch.

Two local doctors, Dr. V. W. Brabham and Dr. W. O. Whetsell, testified after court convened for the afternoon as to the wounds received by Mrs. Stroman. Both doctors said that in their opinion the head wound suffered by Mrs. Stroman caused her death. The wound was described as being about 1 1/2 inches in length.

Dr. Brabham stated that he saw the body of Mrs. Stroman in an ambulance parked in the Thompson Funeral Home yard, and said he saw Mr. Stroman in the emergency room at Orangeburg Regional Hospital.

Dr. Whetsell, while being questioned by Kilgo, testified that his examination of Mrs. Stroman revealed a single blow had hit her on the right side of her head. Mr. Stroman, he said, was in a dazed condition when he saw him at the hospital.

Pough, handling the cross examination at this point, asked Dr. Whetsell if Mrs. Stroman could not have died prior to the wound being inflicted. The doctor answered that it couldn't have.

In regard to his examination of Mr. Stroman, Dr. Whetsell was asked by Pough, "under a dazed condition and considering his age and physical condition, would a person know his every act?" Dr. Whetsell answered that under those conditions he didn't feel a person would know his every act.

COLLINS QUESTIONED

Chief Deputy Sheriff B. N. Collins testified that he was called

Panel Selection Goes Fast

The selection of 12 jurors for Monday's murder trial of Samuel Wright Jr., accused of the February 28 slaying of Mrs. Mary Lee Stroman, required only 25 minutes. Names were drawn from a container by Lewis Culler, six-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Hamp Culler. The small boy passed the slips to clerk of court J. E. Westbury who called the names aloud.

Two prospective jurors, F. T. Murray and John G. Smith, were excused by the court. Murray claimed a "slight kinship" to the deceased. Smith stated he was opposed to capital punishment.

Six other qualified jurors were struck by defense attorneys Sheddric Morgan and Newton Pough. They were R. G. Gramling, Harold Kitterell, W. E. Jeffcoat, O. E. Dukes, Woodrow W. Bolen and J. D. Beal Jr.

One colored man, Mose Middleton, served on the jury. Middleton, the third prospective juror called, was accepted by both the State and defense attorneys.

Besides Middleton, the jury consisted of Rhodene Bonnette, G. L. Cook, A. L. Dukes, R. L. Zeigler and J. A. Antley Jr., Paul Agnew, J. C. Fairry, Jack H. Odum, Bryon Till Jr., Ralph G. King and Leon P. Rogers.

Following selection of the jury, First Circuit Court Judge J. M. Brailsford Jr. appointed G. L. Cook to act as foreman.

The polling of jurors began at 10:27 a. m., and was completed at 10:52 a. m.

Statement Entered Into Evidence In Wright Trial

(EDITOR'S NOTE — The following statement and receipt, both allegedly signed by Samuel Wright Jr., were entered into evidence during yesterday's trial. Wright was convicted on a murder charge and received a death sentence.)

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF RICHLAND

Personally appearing before me, Samuel Wright, Jr., colored, male, who after first being duly sworn deposes and says:

I am 20 years old. I went through the sixth grade in school. I can read and write.

I left from the bus station about quarter after seven at Orangeburg. I went up to my Grandmother's house first and sat there and look-

ed at the television. I told her I was going to Jacky Carmichael's house, but I did not go over there. I got the key out of my Grandmother's door. I went and looked through the window at Mr. Stroman's house. Then I went and got the axe from out of the garage. There was another key in Bill Stroman's door, so I took my Grandmother's key and pushed Mr. Bill Stroman's keys out and opened the door with my Grandmother's key. Then I went in the house and hit Mr. Stroman first. Then Mrs. Stroman went, then I got my pocket book and I went out and got the money out of the pocket book, then I come back.

After I hit Mrs. Stroman's house the first time, I went by the ditch bank and got the money out of the pocket book. I threw the pocket book in a bush and two pieces of papers right by it. Then I went to White Towers Service Station. I bought a beer and a half pint of bootleg whiskey. Then I went back to the house and I cut the television off and Mr. Bill Stroman saw me when I cut the television off, then I went upstairs and looked in a couple of drawers and I come back down and I hit the safe twice with the axe, then I left.

I hit Mr. Stroman with the axe and I hit Mrs. Stroman with the axe, it was the same axe. I got about thirty something dollars out of the pocket book. When I hit the safe with the axe, I was trying to knock the safe open. I wanted some money from my aunt to take the bus to come back to Columbia, and she would not give it to me, so I loved to go in Mr. Stroman's house. When I went in Mr. Stroman's I had the idea to knock Mr. Stroman in the head and get the money.

When I left the second time, I went to a lot of different places, went to the Seven Seas, to Five Points, to Pine Mills place, then to Shiffley Quarters. The next day, on Sunday morning, I went back to Pine Mills place. I spent Saturday night at Shiffley Quarters. I spent Sunday night in the woods.

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I left Orangeburg about 12:00 o'clock Monday. I went out on 301 and to Eutawville. My aunt told me the best thing to do would be for me to turn myself in. She said someone had been looking for me and had been to my Daddy's house.

I have been told that I did not have to make a statement, and that anything I said could be used for or against me in Court.

I make this statement in the presence of L. C. H. Hall, Chief of Detectives, Deputy Sheriff B. N. Collins, Sheriff's Office, Assistant Chief J. P. Strom of the S. C. Law Enforcement Division, and L. J. L. Dollard, of the S. C. Law Enforcement Division.

I make this statement of my own free will and accord, without reward or hope of reward, I have not been threatened or mistreated in any way. All of the above is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

—Samuel Wright, Jr.
SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED TO BEFORE ME THIS 1ST DAY OF MARCH, 1955.
NOTARY PUBLIC FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

WITNESSES:
B. N. Collins
C. H. Hall
L. J. L. Dollard
J. P. Strom

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THE ABOVE STATEMENT AND HAVE BEEN GIVEN A COPY OF SAME AS OF THIS DATE.

—Samuel Wright, Jr.

to the scene at about 8 a. m. on Sunday, February 27 and described the conditions he found at the Stroman home. He identified a picture of a rummaged dresser as one look for Kilgo exclaimed.

MORGAN ENDS DEFENSE

Squire Morgan ended the defense plea by saying, "My heart was touched by this tragedy. If I know deep within my heart that the defendant was the one who performed the act I would ask you members of the jury to find him guilty."

But there has been no evidence placing guilt on this boy except a signed statement. Testimony does not show that he struck the fatal blow, and testimony today shows that he signed the statement with out being advised of his right for counsel and that anything he said would be used against him.

Morgan also contended that Wright was not the assailant because he was not recognized by Mrs. Stroman. "The defendant has worked as a yard boy for the Stromans and surely he would have been recognized by Mrs. Stroman," he said.

Morgan raised the question of why doctors who examined Wright following his confinement in Columbia had not been called on to testify. Judge Brailsford informed the defense that sanity or insanity was not a question in the case since sanity had not been questioned by the defense.

Judge Brailsford, charging the jury for about 15 minutes, expressed appreciation to Pough and Morgan for the work they had done in behalf of the defendant, serving without pay for their efforts.

The jury was instructed that they could return one of three verdicts: murder, murder with recommendation for mercy and manslaughter. "The penalty for murder is death," Judge Brailsford stated. "Should you elect to return a verdict of murder with a recommendation for mercy it is the duty of the court to sentence the defendant to life imprisonment at

Health Dept. Closed Today

Dr. C. I. Goodwin, County Health Director, announced that the County Health Department will be closed today in observance of Confederate Memorial Day. Due to this holiday the general clinic will be cancelled.

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